WARNING:

This story contains shounen-ai elements and the dark and dramatic theme may not be appropriate for younger readers.

Consider yourself warned!

-Esthetique Staff

Act 2 Chapter 3 Credits

scanner: Leguman

Translator: Tomo

Editor: hkgaines

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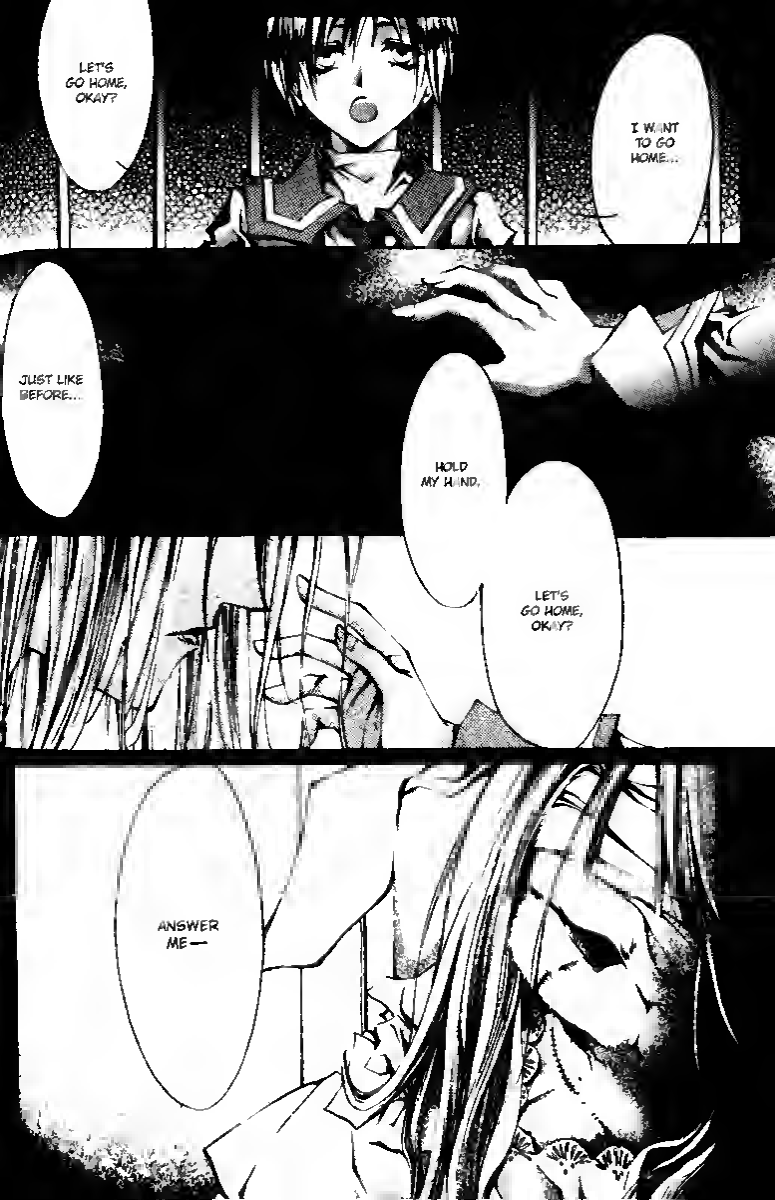
THE THIRD ROUND

So scary.....
It's so scary
WHERE IS THIS?
SHUT UP!!
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
I DON'T WANT TO GO!


LET'S GO HOME, OKAY?
I WANT TO GO HOME...
JUST LIKE BEFORE...
HOLD MY HAND.
LET'S GO HOME, OKAY?
ANSWER ME—

Mommy!!
BIG BROTHER?
BIG BROTHER, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M SO COLD
I WANT TO SLEEP WITH YOU.
I CAN'T FALL ASLEEP, I HAD A NIGHTMARE
THERE WAS WATER ALL AROUND, IT WAS WET AND COLD.
IT WAS REALLY SCARY...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM!

THOSE ADULTS
FROM BE-FORE...
ALL OF THEM HATE US
THERE WERE ALWAYS A LOT OF CHILDREN
THAT CALLED US STRAY KIDS BE-CAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE A DADDY...
BIG BROTH-ER...
WHY IS IT ONLY US THAT DON'T HAVE A DADDY... EVERYONE ELSE HAS A DADDY!
I'M NOT LYING BIG BROTHER...
DAD'S DEAD
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG... I ALMOST CAN'T REMEMBER MOMMY'S FACE...
BUT NOW THERE'S ONLY THE TWO OF US LEFT.
RIGHT, BIG BROTHER MUST HAVE NOTICED FROM WHEN WE WERE LITTLE BIG BROTHER WAS HER FA-VORITE NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION, AND SHE DIDN'T LET ME GET TOO CLOSE TO YOU...
DID MOMMY TELL YOU? SHE'S SO BIASED!

It seems like my little brother became a bit strange
When did it start?
"WHY WAS IT TWINS. HAKUEI IS ENOUGH!"
THAT'S WHAT SHE ALWAYS SAID
Or is it that I'm overly sensitive?
BUT I DON'T MIND AT ALL
REALLY~
Where he touches me, it feels horrible.....
I ONLY NEED BIG BROTHER.
It's like.....
Because he keeps touching the scar on the middle finger of my right hand,
the sensitive and ugly scar

— When did it start? —

IN THE DREAM I JUST HAD.....
I want to barf.....
I SUNK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE WATER
the places that are being touched
AND I COULDN'T CLEARLY SEE YOUR FACE ABOVE THE WATER.....
That's enough!!..
BAM
Shut up!!
Who'd remember something from the past?!
You're so annoying!!

CLICK
EH?
ISN'T IT HAKUEI?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHY AREN'T YOU HAPPY?
AH!
I HAVE SOMETHING GOOD AT MY PLACE...
GO AWAY!!

I forgot to bring my wallet and watch when I left.....
RIIING
HELLO,
WHO IS IT?
J.....
SHHHH
.....
HELLO?
I'M HANGING UP IF YOU'RE NOT TALKING.
.....
IT'S ME.

HA-KUEI?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO CALL MY HOUSE?
DID SOME-THING HAP-PEN?
ARE YOU OKAY?
Why does your voice sound weird?
NOTHING HAPPENED, REALLY
SORRY
I SUD-DENLY WANTED TO CALL YOU.
My voice is shaking
even I can feel it
I'M FINE
CAN I SEE YOU?
Because it's too cold—

RIGHT NOW.....
SORRY I DISTURBED YOU.....
Cold as hell.....
IT'S REALLY NOT ANYTHING TOO IMPORTANT, BUT.....
IF POSSIBLE, I WANT .....
TO SEE YOU.....

I JUST .....
WANTED TO SAY THIS.....
JUST WHAT HAPPENED? DID YOU GUYS HAVE A FIGHT?
IT TOOK A LOT OF EFFORT TO RECOGNIZE THE CHILDISH WRITING ON THE NOTE.....
YOUR BROTHER LEFT A NOTE, SAYING HE LEFT TO FIND YOU .....

DRY YOUR HAIR OR ELSE YOU'LL CATCH A COLD
WHY'D YOU RUN OUT LIKE THAT?
I TOLD HER HEAD-QUARTERS NEEDED ME FOR SOME-THING
YOU CAME OUT SO LATE WON'T YOUR WIFE BE WORRIED?
YOU'RE REALLY A PERSON THAT'S ABLE TO CALMLY LIE....
NO MATTER WHO THE OTHER PERSON IS
IF YOU WANT TO 'L' ME SOMEONE, YOU JUST HAVE TO 'L' ME THOSE PEOPLE.
YOU KNOW "LYING" ISN'T SUCH A BAD THING. I'VE THOUGHT THAT SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
BECAUSE I ALWAYS LIED TO PEOPLE.....
THEY WERE TOO STUPID!

WHEN MY MOM WAS STILL HERE
WE LIVED IN A PRIVATE CONDO IN MANHATTAN
MOM WAS SO YOUNG AND PRETTY THEN
AND THERE WAS A PERSON CALLED "DAD" THAT ALWAYS CAME TO VISIT US
AND THEN ONE DAY THAT PERSON DIDN'T COME ANYMORE
MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE NO ONE PAID OUR BILLS?
WE MOVED OUT OF THE BIG HOUSE
AFTER THE SUDDEN CHANGE, IT WAS LIKE MOM ALSO HAD A BIG SHOCK, BECOMING MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND UNCONTROLLABLE
I WAS REALLY SCARED
ALWAYS THINKING SHE WOULD ABANDON US
I DON'T KNOW WHEN I STARTED TO LIE,
BREAKING THINGS ON PURPOSE, SHATTERING THE NEIGHBOR'S WINDOWS, STEALING BREAD FROM THE SUPERMARKET.....
EVERY TIME I WAS CAUGHT, I WOULD BLAME MY BROTHER.

WE LOOKED THE SAME ANYWAYS,
OTHER PEOPLE COULDN'T TELL WHO DID IT
WE WERE REALLY POOR THEN AND EVERY TIME SOMEONE WE HAD TO COMPENSATE CAME TO OUR DOOR,
SEEING MOTHER BEAT AND YELL AT MY BROTHER
YOU!
I felt extremely satisfied—
DID YOU THINK YOU'D GAINED BACK YOUR MOTHER'S LOVE?
YEAH.
IF WE WERE TWINS THE LITTLE BIT OF LOVE THAT WAS ALREADY THERE WOULD BE SPLIT INTO TWO HALVES

MOM HATED MY BROTHER MORE AND MORE BECAUSE OF THIS ……
IT WAS AS IF SHE WAS AFRAID OF SOMETHING.
THE YEAR WE TURNED ELEVEN, MOM COLLAPSED UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THAT FEAR,
AND BECAME INSANE
SHE RELIED ON ME MORE AND MORE
WATCHING HIM, MOTHER SLOWLY BECAME MORE AND MORE UNSTABLE AND VERY IRRITABLE.
SLOWLY
SHE STARTED TO FEAR ALL PEOPLE
BUT I DIDN'T NEED ……
AND TOWARDS MY LIES AND MY FRAMING OF HIM,
BROTHER NEVER ONCE FOUGHT BACK,
NOT EVEN WHIMPERING AS HE WAS BEATEN,
I THOUGHT HE WAS WEAK ……

THAT KIND OF LOVE
I DIDN'T WANT IT!!
I wanted to run away from home, so I hid behind the garbage bins nearby, wanting to leave once it got dark.
THAT SCARY AND INSANE LOVE...
I DIDN'T WANT IT ANYMORE! I DIDN'T!!
THE TWISTED LOVE SO CLOSE IT GAVE PEOPLE GOOSE-BUMPS...
Maybe it's because she found out I was missing, but there was a loud noise from home. It must have been because mom was beating my brother.
The neighbors had already gotten used to it, they would feign pity saying "Such a pitiful pair of brothers their crazy mom is hitting them again..."
But not one of them would come out and even have a look
It was cold as hell.
That day it was raining softly, I hid behind that garbage bin, waiting for the noise to stop.....
Bastard!
It would have been better if I never gave birth to you!
All of my clothes were soaked.
You're the same as your big brother! You all want to leave me behind.

MOM!
DON'T GO OUT!
YOU CAN'T RUN AROUND!
YOU'LL GET LOST
That day, mom had an attack After hitting brother, she ran out
lost her footing and fell into the sewer water
Brother jumped down to save her
When I rushed there, mom had long been washed away and only brother was left struggling in the water
Big brother
CLIMB UP!
HURRY UP AND GIVE ME YOUR HAND!
But I couldn't save him, we were both only eleven-year-old children.....
There wasn't a single person near the river, and no matter how I shouted, no one ever came.
The rain was getting heavier, and we just stayed like that.....
Being gripped by his hand hurt a lot, I was cold and scared, thinking that my arm was going to fall off, almost getting pulled into the water with him.....
I didn't have enough strength to pull him up.....

Not even one person was there. It was dark all around us and there was only the sound of the flowing water.
I unconciously lifted my head.
and saw in the distance the shimmering lights of an amusement park.
Two eleven-year-olds fighting to stay alive.
and not far off there was another world.
It looked like an amusement park within a dream.....
I could almost hear the children's laughter.
.....it was an unimaginable light.....
I was staring upwards. For how long, I don't know.....
even my fingers were so numb that I felt nothing.

AND THEN
I LET GO.....
YOU TRIED YOUR BEST, HAKUEI .....
YOUR BROTHER DIDN'T DIE,
YOU SHOULD NOT BE BLAMING YOURSELF.
That's not what I was trying to say! I didn't blame myself because of that!
Mom died and I was free!
Like a naive little kid, brother cant remember what happened before. Thats for the best!
But it started going wrong somewhere! Everything went wrong!
I can calmly live the rest of my life.... I thought this was all the best!

Ever since some time in the past, you or him—
it was all the same—
WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
LET'S LEAVE OKAY? JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING BEHIND LET'S LEAVE NEW YORK, LET'S GO TO ANOTHER PLACE AND START A NEW LIFE
LET'S GO TO A PLACE WHERE NO ONE KNOWS US!
I SWEAR TO BREAK TIES WITH EVERYTHING RIGHT NOW!
I want to get away from it all!
SPAIN, SOUTH CAROLINA, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE!
BUILD A SMALL WHITE HOUSE IN A QUIET SECLUDED PLACE!
I COULD LOOK FOR A JOB, GO TO SCHOOL..... START A NEW NORMAL LIFE!
JUN?
WE CAN HAVE OUR OWN HOME .....

I'M BEG-GING YOU
SO I COULD FORGET THE PAST
I CAN'T.
LET'S LEAVE
OKAY?
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HOPING FOR SOMEONE
TO GIVE ME A RING THAT COULD COVER THIS SCAR

I C..N'T GIVE YOU A RING,
AND I C..N'T TAKE YOU AW..Y.
BE-CAUSE I HAVE A F..MILY.
I CAN ONLY PROTECT THE NOW.
WHY CAN'T YOU TELL A LIE THIS TIME?
Yes.
my hand, from the start, couldn t grasp anything.
EVEN IF IT'S A LIE, I WOULDN'T MIND...
DON'T THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS, JUST HAVE A GOOD REST.
HAVE A GOOD SLEEP.
I SHOULD BE GETTING HOME
GOOD NIGHT.
Just like how he never allows me to call his house, and doesn't acknowledge our relationship
If I can't get into his life.....

I know that this is a person I can't have
DON'T MOVE
My gun?
YOU'VE BEEN SECRETLY DEALING WITH CHARLES ALL ALONG, RIGHT?
I HAVE YOUR MERCHANDISE.
YOU ONCE SAID THAT WE LOWER CLASS ARE GARBAGE,
LIKE RATS IN A DITCH.
BECAUSE WE'RE POOR, OUR MORALS ARE BAD, AND WE DESERVE TO SUFFOCATE IN THIS CHEAP APARTMENT, RIGHT?

BUT
YOU'RE WORSE THAN US!
YOU'RE THE BIGGEST WRONG-DOER!
CHARLES
YOU GET WHAT I MEAN?
YOU'RE SUCH AN ANNOYING PERSON!
Disgusting
THAT WOMAN
YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR WIFE'S FACE AGAIN!
I UNDER-STAND HIM EVEN MORE THAN YOU.
Disgusting!

The sickly feeling of wet fingers sliding on plastic sheeting, murky white water splashing all over
Mixed with the icy cold air and the buzzing sound from the air conditioner
along with my cheap love and laughable naivete, it all flushed down into the sewers
LOSING THIS MERCHANDISE,
CHARLES WON'T FORGIVE YOU
IT'S UP TO YOU WHETHER OR NOT TO STAY AND BE KILLED!
THIS GAME,
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF IT!
I'M LEAVING YOU,
If I can't have it,
GOODBYE!
LEAVING NEW YORK—
then it's better if it's shattered!

Close
GOOD EVEN-ING~
MEOW~
WHAT?!

YOU REALIZED THAT I DID BUSINESS WITH CHARLES AND, AFRAID THAT I WOULD FIND OUT THIS SECRET,
YOU WANTED TO LEAVE NEW YORK, RIGHT?
I SAID WE SHOULD BE HAPPY WITH WHAT WE HAD.
BUT YOU WANTED TOO MUCH
I'M RETURNING YOU TO YOUR FATHER
GOOD-BYE
JUST TO CONFIRM, DETECTIVE JUN,
BEFORE MR. CHARLES MET THAT WOMAN,
SHE WAS ALREADY PREGNANT.
THEY DON'T HAVE ANY BLOOD RELATION

DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
Close
I NEED TO GO HOME
DON'T
That night, the whole world went insane,
the dried butterflies waltzed strangely in the room, emitting waves of sharp ridiculing laughs.....

In my broken line of sight through eyes that were becoming unfocused,
I almost saw the lights of an amusement park far in the distance.
YOU'VE BEEN CHARGED WITH THEFT, FRAUD, SELLING ILLEGAL DRUGS
AND MANY OTHER COUNTS
MR. CHARLES PROVIDED MANY WITNESSES AND EVIDENCE
BECAUSE YOU'RE STILL UNDER-AGE,
THE COURT MAY BE MORE LENIENT BUT YOU'LL STILL FACE ABOUT THIRTY YEARS IN PRISON.
YOU CAN CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THE DEFENSE LAWYER
—YOU WILL FACE THE JURY.

DETECTIVE JUN TOLD ME TO GIVE YOU THIS
HE SAID IF YOU WERE STILL CONSCIOUS AT THAT TIME YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME RECOGNITION
WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY
HAVE YOU FINISHED COUNTING MY WRONGDOINGS?

Laugh at me,

mock me,

betray me,

you and everything about you,
has been destroyed in my heart.

Forever,
non-existent—

I

suddenly
forgot my own
name.....

ELEVEN YEARS AGO AFTER THE TRIAL ENDED, SHE LIVED REALLY POORLY.
SHE DROWNED FOUR YEARS AGO IN A SEWER IN THE SLUMS.
YES, I KNOW.
I CAN JUST B.S. THE REPORT.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES.
I'LL SEND MY SECRETARY OVER SHORTLY.
RIGHT.
DETECTIVE JUN.
GOOD WORK.
HAVE A GOOD WEEK OFF.
THANKS...
Really.....
I haven't taken Anna out in a while...

I just remembered,
today is Thanksgiving...
My and Anna's first child is about to be born.
The name Hakuei.....
I will bury it in my heart and slowly forget about him.....

HONEY,
I'M BACK~
ARE YOU IN THE KITCHEN?
ANNA?
ANNA?
Jingle
HAKUEI?!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?!!

That's.....
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE IN JAIL?!
I SAID I WAS THE BABY MERCHANDISE SALESMAN.
AND YOUR WIFE OPENED THE DOOR FOR ME
HOW COULD YOU ENTER MY HOME?!
EH?
SO YOU NOTICED?
IT'S SO PRETTY
I GOT IT FROM THAT WOMAN'S HAND. IS IT YOUR WEDDING RING?
LOOK!
IT'S A PERFECT FIT—
WHERE'S ANNA?!
What did you do to Anna?!
Where is she?!

GO ASK GOD—
YOU'RE HAKUEI'S LITTLE BROTHER?
GOOD EVENING.
DETECTIVE JUN.
CORRECT!

WERE YOU THE ONE WHO GOT PEOPLE TO RECORD THESE TAPES?
Weird, didn't he become crazy after falling into the water that time?
IT'S A GOOD WAY TO MAKE SOMEONE SHUT UP.
BIG BROTHER WITH HIS STUBBORN AND NAIVE BRAIN.
WOULDN'T GUESS FOR SURE.....
THAT YOU WOULD BETRAY HIM FOR MONEY, AND DO THAT KIND OF THING
HAKUEI PROBABLY ALREADY KNEW IT
YOU SAW IT TOO, RIGHT?
WHAT KIND OF EXPRESSION DID YOU USE TO SEE IT?
YOU..... HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH BIG BROTHER
YOU'RE
NOT SAD?

MOMMY WAS STRANGE FROM THE BEGINNING.
SO PRETTY
BUT ALSO REALLY PRETTY
BIG BROTHER'S FACE WAS SO SAD
SHE WAS JUST OUR MOTHER, BUT SHE WANTED TO TAKE BIG BROTHER AWAY.
I HATED HER!
AND THAT SHE DROWNED IN THE WATER
SHE WAS ALWAYS DOTING ON BIG BROTHER, HE PROBABLY TOLD YOU THESE THINGS RIGHT?
THAT DAY, I WAS THE ONE WHO PUSHED HER INTO THE WATER!
Insane, he's insane⇒

Has he been faking all along?
WHAT "LOSING HER FOOTING."
IT WAS A LIE I MADE UP TO FOOL MY BIG BROTHER!
BIG BROTHER, ONLY NEEDS ME!
IN THIS WORLD
Under the pretense of insanity...
THE PERSON WITH THE SAME FACE AND DNA IS ME
is a split personality!
I'M THE PERSON CLOSEST TO HIM
BUT HE CAN NEVER ATTAIN IT!
I want to barf!
What is he saying?
I can't hear
THIS RING,
IS SOMETHING BIG BROTHER HAS ALWAYS WANTED
BECAUSE ON THE EXACT SAME SPOT ON HIS FINGER,
The nauseating feeling of barfing
IS A MARK I LEFT ON HIM.
SOMETHING HE CAN NEVER LOSE

AREN'T YOU CURIOUS.....
WHY I KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT YOU TWO,
WHY I UNDER-STAND?
Who is this monster with this level of sickness, wearing a creepy smile...?
"MOMMY'S ARM BROKE AGAIN"
"BECAUSE SHE'S TOO DISGUSTING, SO I PUNISHED HER"
BECAUSE
"OOOH, BIG BROTHER'S ALSO IN HER STOMACH"
I want to barf
WHEN YOU GUYS WERE TOGETHER, I WAS ALWAYS LISTENING THROUGH THE WALL...
EVERY. SINGLE. TIME.....

In this world, I'm supposed to be the one closest to him
Yeah! I'm crazy!
SHUT UP! YOU'RE CRAZY!
HE'S YOUR BIG BROTHER!
Why do you people have to barge into our lives?!
Stealing his love! His EVERYTHING! It was supposed to be ME ALONE!
He gave his love to too many people....
Ha
Ha
leaving all of my desires empty!
But you forgot, because I'm such a crazy, insane wacko,
If I hurt someone,
I don't have to bear any responsibility

What responsibility?
What is he saying?
My head hurts
What is this flowing from the ceiling? It's sticky and wet and dripping on the floor
Sticky and wet
AHHHH
AWA!
Today is Thanksgiving
our first child is about to be born

(THE THIRD ROUND - END)

NOTE:
THIS SERIES IS
READ FROM LEFT
TO RIGHT

Need...more...staff...

ESTHETIQUE NEEDS YOU TO HELP SAVE THIS CUTE LITTLE FELLA! DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES? WE NEED JAPANESE TRANSLATORS, EDITORS, AND EXPERIENCED QC-ERS, STAT!

JOIN US AT
HTTP://WWW.ESTHETIQUE-REALM.NET

IMAGE FROM ME AND MY AINIA BY RYAN